

Or elles hadde this sorwe hir herte slayn.
HIRE freendes sawe hir sorwe gan to slake,
And preyde hire on knees, for Goddes sake,
To come and romen hire in compaignye,
Awey to dryve hire derke fantasye.
And finally she graunted that requeste;
for wel she saugh that it was for the beste.

All stood hire castel faste by the
see,
And often with hire freendes walketh
shee
Hire to disporte upon the bank an
heigh,

Wher as she many a ship and barge seigh
Seillynge hir cours, wheras hem liste go;
But thanne was that a parcel of hire wo.
for to himself ful ofte Alas! seith she,
Is ther no ship, of so manye as I se,
Wol bryngen hom my lord? Thanne were myn
herte

Al warissed of his bittre peynes smerte.

ANOTHER tyme ther wolde she sitte and
thynke,

And caste hir eyen downward fro the brynke.
But whan she saugh the grisly rokkes blake,
for verray feere so wolde hir herte quake,
That on hire feet she myghte hire nocht sustene.
Thanne wolde she sitte adoun upon the grene,
And pitously into the see biholde,

And seyn right thus, with sorweful sikkes colde:
Eterne God, that thurgh thy purveiaunce
Ledest the world by certein governaunce,
In ydel, as men seyn, ye nothyng make;

But, Lord, thise grisly feendly rokkes blake,
That semen rather a foul confusioun
Of werk than any fair creacioun
Of swich a parfit wys God and a stable,

Why han ye wrought this werk unresonable?
for by this werk, south, north, ne west, ne east,
Ther nys yfostred man, ne bryd, ne beest;
It dooth no good, to my wit, but anyeth.

Se ye nat, Lord, how mankynde it destroyeth?
An hundred thousand bodyes of mankynde
Han rokkes slayn, al be they nat in mynde,
Which mankynde is so fair part of thy werk
That thou it madest lyk to thyn owene merk.

Thanne semed it ye hadde a greet chiertee
Toward mankynde; but how thanne may it bee
That ye swiche meenes make it to destroyen,
Whiche meenes do no good, but evere anyen?

I woot wel clerkes wol seyn, as hem leste,
By arguments, that al is for the beste,
Though I ne kan the causes nat yknowe.
But thilke God, that made wynd to blowe,
As kepe my lord! this my conclusioun;

To clerkes lete I al disputacioun.
But wolde God that alle thise rokkes blake
Were sonken into helle for his sake.
Thise rokkes sleen myn herte for the feere.

Thus wolde she seyn with many a pitous teere.
HIRE freendes sawe that it was no disport
To romen by the see, but disconfort;

And shopen for to pleyen somwher elles.

They leden hire by ryveres and by welles,
And eek in othere places delitable;
They dauncen, and they pleyen at ches and tables.
So on a day, right in the morwe tyde,
Unto a gardyn that was ther bisyde,

In which that they hadde maad hir ordinaunce
Of vitaille and of oother purveiaunce,
They goon and pleye hem al the longe day;
And this was in the sixte morwe of May,

Which May hadde peynted with his softe shoures
This gardyn ful of leves and of floures;
And craft of mannes hand so curiously
Arrayed hadde this gardyn, trewely,
That nevere was ther gardyn of swich prys,

But if it were the verray Paradys.
The odour of floures and the fresshe sighte
Wolde han makid any herte lighte
That evere was born, but if to greet siknesse,
Or to greet sorwe, helde it in distresse;

So ful it was of beautee with plesaunce.
After dynere gonne they to daunce,
And synge also, save Dorigen allone,
Which made alwey hir compleint and hir
moone;

for she ne saugh hym on the daunce go,
That was hir housbonde and hir love also.
But natheles she moste a tyme abyde,
And with good hope lete hir sorwe styde.

AFTON this daunce, amonges
other men,
Daunced a squier biforen Dorigen,
That fressher was, and jolyer of
array,

As to my doom, than is the
monthe of May;
He syngeth, daunceth, passyng any man
That is, or was, sith that the world bigan.

Therwith he was, if men sholde hym discryve,
Oon of the beste farynge man on lyve;
Yong, strong, right vertuous, and riche and wys,
And wel biloved, and holden in greet prys.

And shortly, if the sothe I tellen shal,
Unwityng of this Dorigen at al,
This lusty squier, servant to Venus,
Which that ycleped was Aurelius,
Hadde loved hire best of any creature

Two yer and moore, as was his aventure,
But nevere dorste he telle hire his grevaunce;
Withouten coppe he drank al his penaunce.
He was despayred, nothyng dorste he seye,
Save in his songes somewhat wolde he wryte

His wo, as in a general compleynyng;
He seyde he lovede, and was biloved nothyng.
Of swich matere made he manye layes,
Songes, compleintes, roundels, vielayes;

How that he dorste nat his sorwe telle,
But langwissheth, as a furye dooth in helle;
And dye he moste, he seyde, as dide Ekko
for Narcisus, that dorste nat telle hir wo.

In oother manere than ye heer me seye,
Ne dorste he nat to hire his wo biwrye;
Save that, paraventure, som tyme at daunces,
Ther yonge folk kepen hir observaunces,



It may wel be he looked on hir face
In swich a wise, as man that asketh grace;
But nothyng wiste she of his entente.

Natheles, it happed, er they thennes wente,
Bycause that he was hire neighebour,
And was a man of worship and honour,
And hadde yknowen hym of tyme yore,
They fille in speche; and forth moore and
moore

Unto his purpos drough Aurelius,
And whan he saugh his tyme, he sayde thus:

ADHME, quod he, by God that this
world made,
So that I wiste it myghte youre herte
glade,

I wolde, that day that youre Arveragus
Wente over the see, that I, Aurelius,
Hadde went ther nevere I sholde have come
agayn;

for wel I woot my servyce is in vayn.
My guerdoun is but brestyng of myn herte;
Madame, reweth upon my peynes smerte;
for with a word ye may me sleen or save,
Heere at youre feet God wolde that I were
grave!

I ne have as now no leyser moore to seye;
Have mercy, sweete, or ye wol do me deye!

SHE gan to looke upon Aurelius:
Is this your wyl, quod she, and sey ye
thus?

Nevere erst, quod she, ne wiste I what ye
mente;
But now, Aurelie, I knowe youre entente,
By thilke God that yaf me soule and lyf,

Ne shal I nevere been untrewed wyf
In word ne werk; as fer as I have wit,
I wol been his to whom that I am knyght!
Taak this for fynal answer as of me.

But after that in pley thus seyde she:
Aurelie, quod she, by heighe God above!
Yet wolde I graunte yow to been youre love,
Syn I yow se so pitously complayne;

Looke what day that, endelong Britayne,
Ye remoeve alle the rokkes, stoon by stoon,
That they ne lette ship ne boot to goon,
I seye, whan ye han maad the coost so clene
Of rokkes, that ther nys no stoon ysene,

Thanne wol I love yow best of any man;
Have heer my trouthe in al that evere I kan!
IS ther noon oother grace in yow? quod
he.
No, by that Lord, quod she, that
maked me!
for wel I woot that it shal never bityde.